Cancun Ministerial Conference, Members of the World Trade Organization (WTO), which include Brazil, China and South Africa, were in favour of early resumption of negotiations on the Doha Work Programme, which includes agriculture After intensive negotiations, the General Council of the WTO adopted on 1 August 2004 by consensus of all its Members, a Decision on the Doha Work Programme incorporating also a *Framework for Establishing Modalities in Agriculture.* The elements and principles contained in this Framework duly address India's farm sector interest and concerns, *inter alia,* to ensure that developed countries' commitments will result in substantial reductions in trade-distorting domestic subsidies provided to their farm sector, export subsidies will be eliminated by a credible end date, and substantial market access improvements will result for products of export interest to developing countries. Moreover, consistent with the Doha mandate to negotiate on agriculture, any additional commitments, particularly in market access, by developing countries like India should serve to safeguard their food and livelihood security concerns and rural developments needs.

(c) and (d) Countervailing duties can be levied by Government pursuant to an investigation initiated and conducted in accordance with the relevant provisions of the WTO Agreements. Only based on receipt of sufficient evidence of the existence of a subsidy, injury and causal link in agricultural products from any WTO Member, including the US and the EU, can the Government exercise this right.

Economic Cooperation Agreement with Singapore

1955. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the status of the negotiations on a comprehensive economic cooperation agreement between India and Singapore;

(b) whether it is a fact that in the last week of September 2003, fourth round official meeting was held;

(c) whether any time-frame has been fixed to finalise the details; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) Negotiations on

India-Singapore Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) are still going on

(b) The 4th Round of discussions were held in Singapore from 22-24 September 2003.

(c) and (d) While no time frame has been fixed to finalize the details, it is proposed to conclude the negotiations early

Free Trade Agreement with Thailand

†1956. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have signed any Free Trade Agreement with Thailand, if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether Government are aware of the fact that Bangkok, the capital of Thailand is a centre of activities of several terrorist outfits operating in India and keeping in view this fact would it not adversely affect the trade relations between both the countries; and

(c) by when a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement would come into effect between India and Thailand and the areas which would be commercially benefited by them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) India and Thailand have signed only a Framework Agreement for establishing a Free Trade Area (FTA) on 9th October, 2003 in Bangkok, Thailand. The key elements of the Framework Agreement cover FTA in Goods, Services and Investment, and Areas of Economic Cooperation. The Framework Agreement also provides for an Early Harvest Scheme (EHS) under which common items have been agreed for elimination of tariffs on a fast track basis.

(b) The issues relating to terrorism are not part of FTA Negotiations.

(c) The Framework Agreement provides for timeframes for negotiations on FTA in goods, services and investments. The Framework Agreement prescribes for establishing India-Thailand Free Trade Area in

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.